

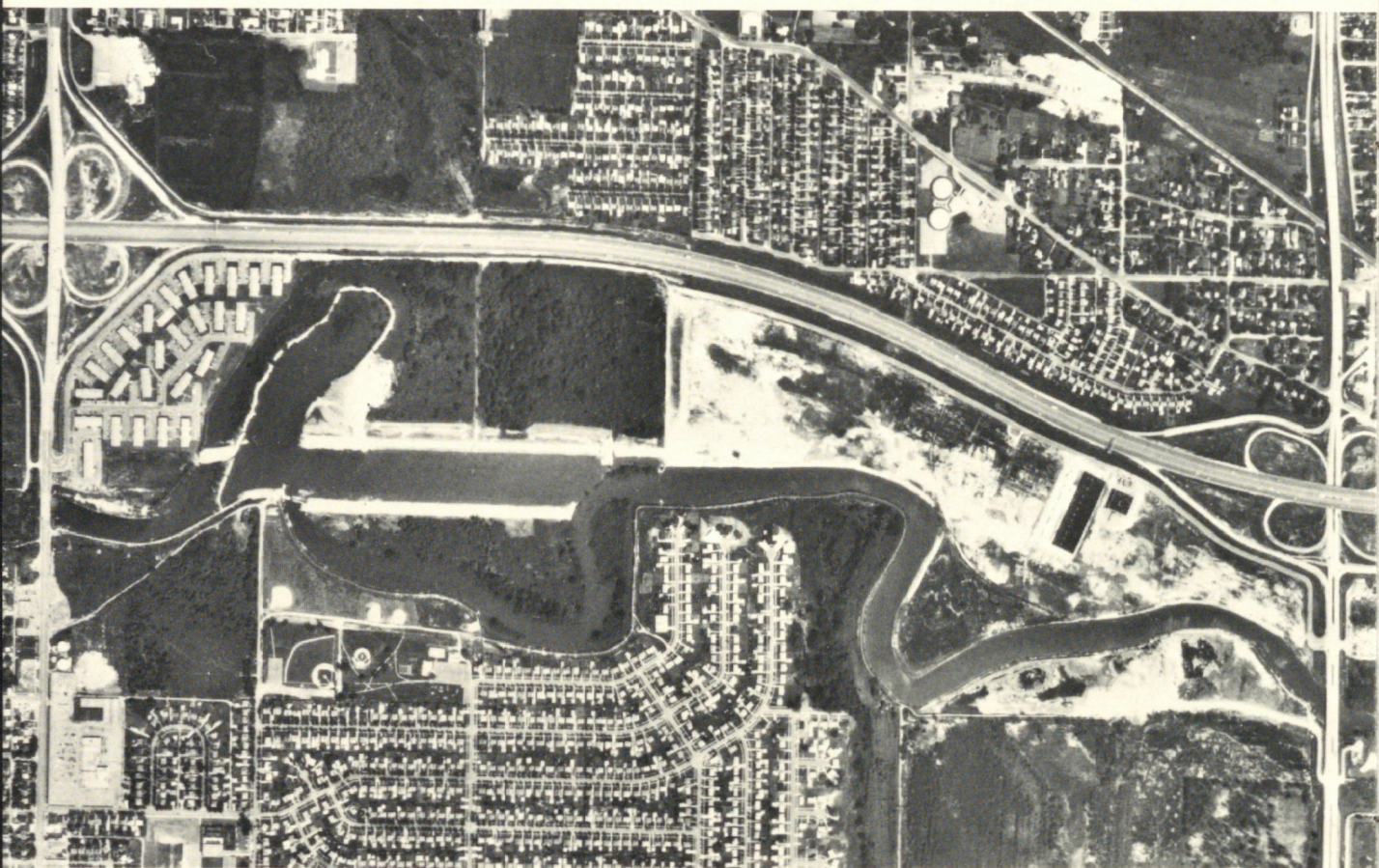
FOR REFERENCE ONLY

INDIANA COLLECTION
Little Calumet River

reclaiming a resource



little calumet
river basin
commission



history and background

The Little Calumet River is one of the principle geographic features of Northwest Indiana. The basin covers 600 square miles, and, in Indiana, drains a highly urbanized area of approximately 500,000 people. The river and its environs were once the major hunting grounds of the Pottawatomis, and later the area's first white settlement--Baillytown--was established on its banks. The clear water of the Calumet attracted George Hammond, who needed a source of clean ice for refrigerating meat packed and shipped by rail during summer.

Since that time, in the late 1800's, the river has been overwhelmed by development. Parking lots, highways and homes have increased storm-water runoff, created constrictions in the channel and polluted the stream. So the river has become a nuisance, its water murky and stagnant, its floods damaging homes and property. In attempts to improve it, the river has, in places, been dredged, diked and straightened. Nevertheless, the total impact of man's activity has been to virtually destroy the river--not consciously, but through a continuing series of small acts--rendering it incapable of doing well any of the things a river should do.

In short, the river is now a liability to the region. Yet, the Little Calumet offers significant potential: it could provide the kind of drain-

age the area needs; it could be a green corridor of trees and grass slicing through this urban landscape of steel, glass and concrete; it could bring recreational opportunities within a short distance of thousands of urban dwellers. In other words, it could become one of the region's major assets.

The Little Calumet River Basin Commission is dedicated to that goal. Formed in 1971 under the authority of state law, the Commission is the first agency with a comprehensive interest in the river and its tributaries. It includes a member from each of the communities, and the two counties, Lake and Porter, within the basin, and operates on an annual budget of \$50,000, contributed by each entity in proportion to their land area within the basin. To assist the Basin Commission, an Advisory Committee was formed in 1973, bringing to the effort to improve the river further technical expertise and broader community involvement.

The Commission harbors no illusions about the work required to turn the Little Calumet River into an asset for the enjoyment of every citizen in the basin. But there is determination to pursue that end and there are hopes that others will assist in the arduous and painstaking work of reclaiming this vital resource.

flood control

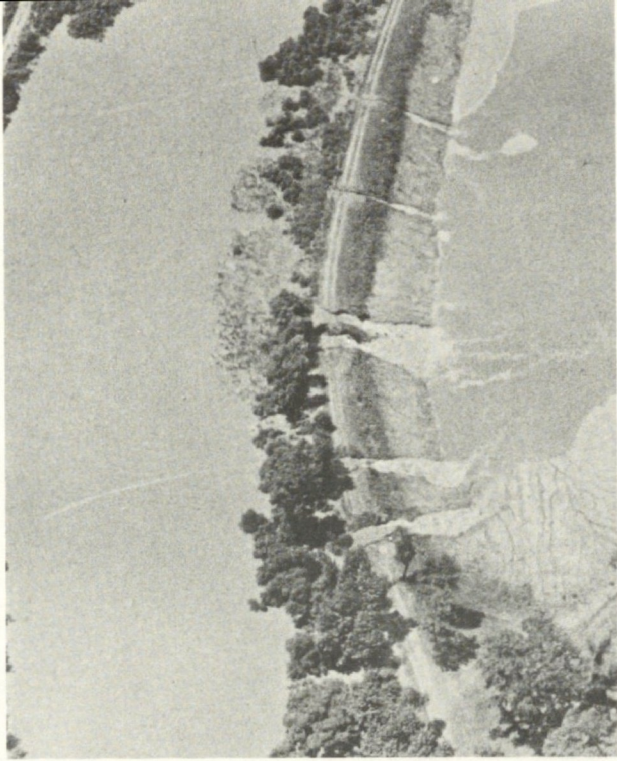
problems

Damage occurs when floodwaters inundate valuable property. There are two causes: one is natural--the floodwaters; the other is artificial--the placing of damageable property in a flood prone environment. To eliminate flood damage, one or both causes must be eliminated.

The amount of development in the Little Calumet Basin has increased both problems. Roads, driveways, roof tops, parking lots--all reduce the area of water-absorbing soil, hence increasing the volume and speed of storm water runoff. Floodflows are therefore higher and peak sooner, while the river's capacity remains the same. Structures built in the flood plain have reduced the natural storage capacity of the river system. Bridges have been constructed with inadequate passages for floodflows further constricting drainage.

The result is a continuing cycle of increased flooding and higher damage costs.





accomplishments

During the past year, the Basin Commission has worked closely with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers on a study for improving the Little Calumet River. Scheduled for completion by the end of 1973, the study investigated the costs and benefits of flood control and recreation.

The flood control aspects include recommendations for dredging and rechanneling to provide protection against a 200-year flood. To achieve such protection, some leveeing would be needed, but the natural terrain of the river would be maintained wherever possible. The Basin Commission sponsored public meetings to keep local officials and citizens abreast of the study's findings; evaluated and commented on the Environmental Impact Report which accompanied the study; and provided continuing information and review. The Corps has announced its intention to recommend approval of the Little Calumet project for inclusion in the 1974 Omnibus Bill to be submitted to Congress.

The Basin Commission evaluated and commented on the Corps' Deep River-Turkey Creek Flood Information Study, and provided information for a similar study on Hart Ditch.

Coordination with local governments included arranging a joint meeting with officials of Dyer, Schererville, Munster, Highland and Griffith to discuss Hart Ditch and Cady Marsh Ditch drainage problems.

During the year, the Basin Commission cooperated with the Department of Housing and Urban Development to disseminate Federal Flood Insurance information and, in cooperation with the Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission, began compiling a comprehensive drainage study for Lake and Porter counties.

The Basin Commission initiated a study on property ownership within 600 feet of the Little Calumet and is routinely receiving and reviewing flood plain construction permits through a working agreement with the State of Indiana Department of Natural Resources.

In addition, the Commission published a brochure on flood plain management as part of an on-going public information program.

These efforts contribute to improved land management practices and less flood damage along the Little Calumet River.

recreation



problems

As it grew into one of the nation's major industrial centers, Northwest Indiana bent its efforts to producing steel, housing workers and providing necessary goods and services.

Priority for developing vacant land was usually granted to one of those uses. Consequently, by most standards, Northwest Indiana is deficient in public open space and recreational opportunities.

Only more recently, as affluence has increased leisure time, have other demands begun to play a significant role in the competition for land.

Primarily, the change has meant that large parks, greenbelts and nature preserves are being planned and promoted close to, if not within, urban areas, and are now considered an important element in providing a balanced environment for human activity.



To complement the Corps' proposals, the Basin Commission approved, in 1973, a land use study to begin in 1974. Utilizing the inventories of land ownership, zoning, pollution and drainage completed by the Commission, and accepted flood plain management practices, a recommended plan for future uses of land within the study area will be developed. Emphasis of the plan will be placed upon 1) the development of the recreational corridor concept; 2) the elimination of flooding problems; and 3) residential, commercial and industrial land use opportunities in areas to be protected from flood hazards.

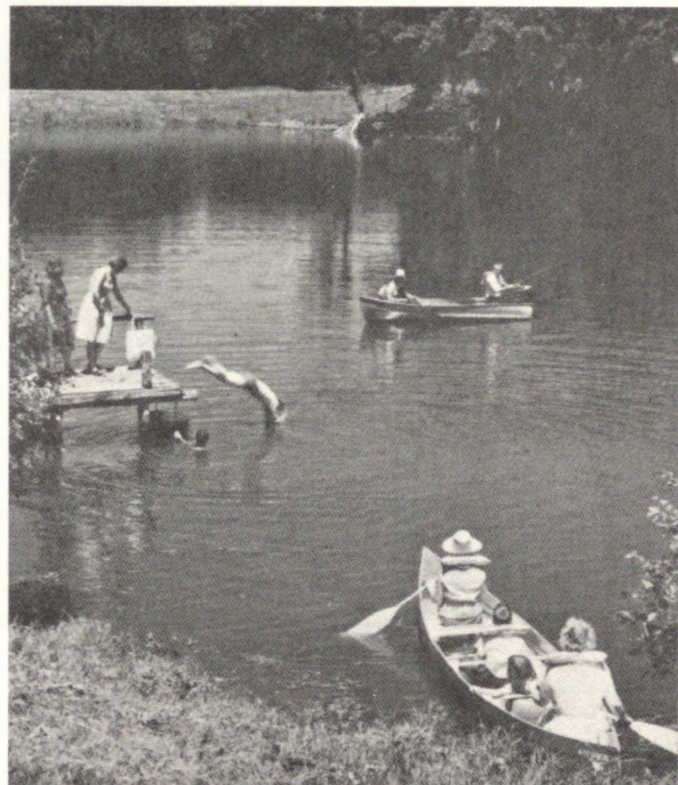
During the year, the Basin Commission cooperated with the Lake County Department of Parks and Recreation, which is planning the acquisition and development of land along the Little Calumet River. This action by a local unit of government is a significant step toward realizing the potential value of the river.

accomplishments

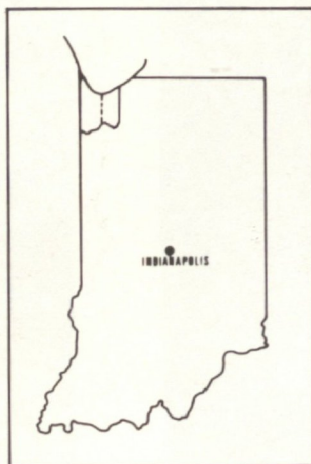
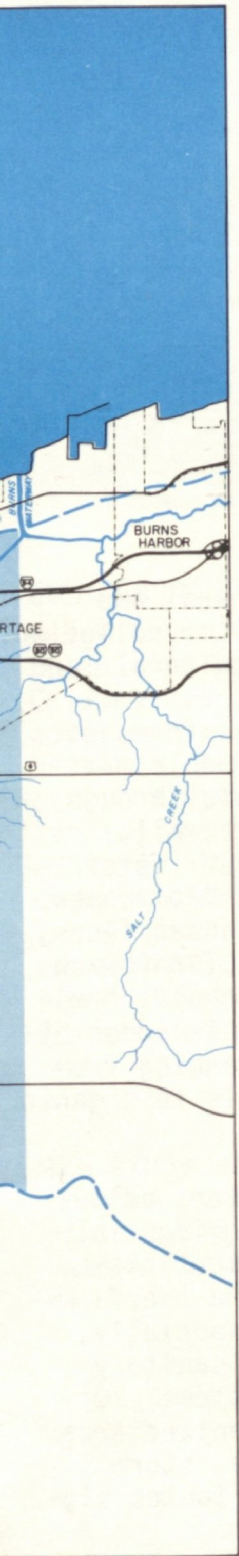
Fortunately, there is a significant amount of vacant land in close proximity to urban dwellers. For the most part, that land lies along the Little Calumet River. The threat of flooding and unstable soil conditions have discouraged development, although some has occurred. The improvements envisioned by the Basin Commission would allow the creation of significant recreational facilities and opportunities.

The Corps of Engineers study discussed earlier has proposed, for example, a power boating channel upstream to the Deep River confluence; two large off-channel marinas; nine recreational nodes along the river providing picnic grounds, campsites and toboggan hills; and hiking and biking trails stretching the length of the river.










As in the flooding aspects of the Corps' study, the Basin Commission has provided continuing review and comment, as well as data, for the recreation portion of the study.







LEGEND:

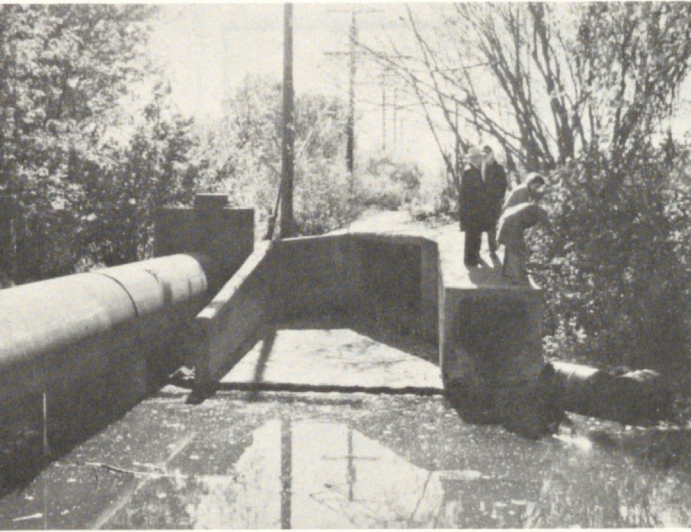
-  RIVER OR STREAM
-  BASIN BOUNDARY
-  LAKE
-  U.S. HIGHWAY
-  INTERSTATE HIGHWAY
-  CITY BOUNDARY
-  COUNTY BOUNDARY
-  STATE BOUNDARY
-  AREA OF BASIN COMMISSION RESPONSIBILITY



**LITTLE CALUMET RIVER
BASIN AREA
INDIANA**

LITTLE CALUMET RIVER BASIN COMMISSION

water quality



problems

Almost every form of natural and human activity causes water pollution. Water draining off agricultural land carries with it fertilizers, soil, insecticides and numerous forms of decaying animal and vegetable matter. Water draining off streets through storm sewers carries dirt, oil, trash and decaying leaves. Water entering sanitary sewers from homes and businesses contains human feces, garbage, laundry wastes, floor washings, and a host of household chemicals. The water pollutants added by industries are varied, ranging from highly toxic, heavy metals to organic wastes.

In the Little Calumet River, pollution is largely due to residential activity--either by septic tanks polluting ground water and overflowing during floods, or, especially, by overflows of combined sanitary and storm water sewer systems. Of course, in a heavily urbanized area such as Northwest Indiana, storm water runoff itself contributes significantly to the problem.

The result is a stream with a high degree of turbidity, significant coliform levels and a lack of dissolved oxygen to sustain plant and fish life.



accomplishments

Heretofore, a comprehensive approach to abating pollution in the Little Calumet has never been adopted. Each governmental entity exercised the level of control it deemed appropriate, but overall coordination was lacking and virtually impossible to achieve. With a view to contributing to consistent application of existing regulations and to assist local government in enforcement, the Basin Commission decided to initiate a Pollution Inventory of the Little Calumet. That inventory will begin in mid-1974.

The study will analyze the pollution problem of the river, focusing on present sources, both public and private. Particular emphasis will be

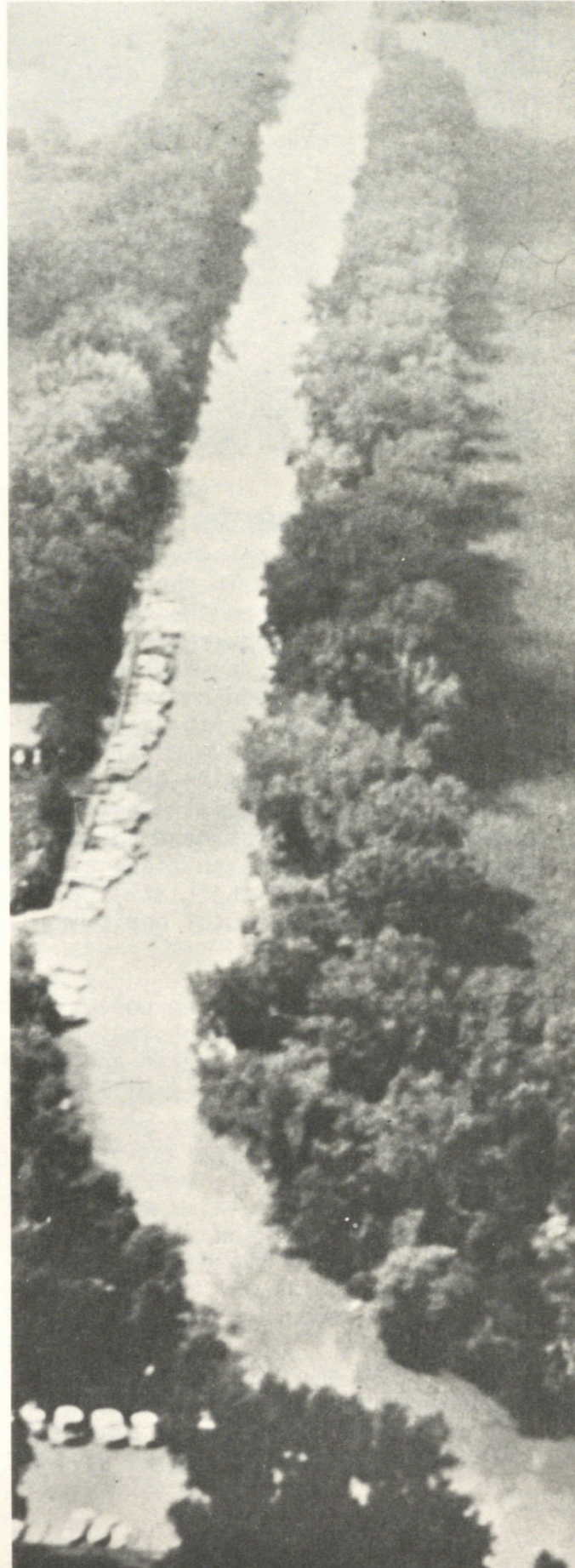
placed on illegal dumping activities such as outfalls. The report will recommend action to effectively eliminate such activity. A large part of the study will require field work. The report will map all pollution sources--and color code them to differentiate various types.

The inventory will assist the effort to reclaim the river in two ways. First, it will contribute to fulfilling the Federal requirement that the Little Calumet (or any other stream) meet minimum State water quality standards before any Federal funds are expended on a flood control project. Second, it will provide data necessary in carrying out the Basin Commission's surveillance and monitoring activities.



goals and objectives

- Eliminate flooding
- Establish effective recreational opportunities
- Control water pollution
- Establish land conservation practices
- Participate and coordinate with Corps of Engineers to bring about realistic flood control program
- Seek favorable Federal and State approval and funding
- Prepare plan for securing non-federal share of funds from State, County and Local sources
- Prepare land and water conservation program in coordination and cooperation with other agencies
- Prepare appropriate legislation as required



general work program

ADMINISTRATION

1. Prepare and record minutes of Commission meetings
2. Prepare and distribute agenda
3. Prepare required correspondence
4. Prepare and submit periodic reports
5. Respond to inquiries about Commission activities
6. Liaison with Regional Planning Commission
7. Community information

PROJECT MANAGEMENT

1. Liaison with U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
2. Liaison with Legislature and Congress
3. Liaison with local governments
4. Corridor surveillance and re-examination
 - a. Property inventory
 - b. Acquisition plan
 - c. Extension to west
 - d. Land use changes
5. Generation of cooperative efforts
6. Landscape design opportunities
7. Public ownership and private development of land
8. Funding opportunities
9. Supporting testimony at public meetings
10. Clearance of obstructions

IDENTIFY ISSUES, NEEDS AND GOALS

1. Environment
 - a. Water quality
 - b. Recreation
 - c. Open space
 - d. Drainage
 - e. Urban design
2. Land use
 - a. Flood plain
 - b. Commercial
 - c. Industrial
 - d. Residential
3. Impact of service systems
 - a. Transportation
 - b. Utilities
4. Institutional
 - a. Surveillance
 - b. Regulation
 - c. Operation
 - d. Relations with Department of Natural Resources

interim financial report

JANUARY 1, 1973 thru NOVEMBER 30, 1973

EXPENDITURES

PROGRAM OUTLAYS IN 1973 FOR 1973	\$ 30,259.49
PROGRAM OUTLAYS IN 1973 FOR 1972	2,251.26
CASH IN BANK - NOVEMBER 30, 1973	<u>22,613.86</u>
TOTAL	\$ 55,124.61

CASH RECEIVED

CASH IN BANK DECEMBER 31, 1972	\$ 797.03
CASH RECEIVED - LISTED BELOW	54,167.00
INTEREST EARNED	<u>160.58</u>
TOTAL	\$ 55,124.61

SOURCE OF REVENUES - JANUARY 1, 1973 thru NOVEMBER 30, 1973

Lake County	\$ -0-
Porter County	4,750.00
Cedar Lake	100.00
Crown Point	650.00
Dyer	1,150.00
East Gary	1,250.00
Gary	-0-
Griffith	1,250.00
Hammond	1,450.00
Highland	1,450.00
Hobart	3,150.00
Merrillville	-0-
Munster	1,600.00
New Chicago	150.00
Ogden Dunes	50.00
Portage	2,650.00
Schererville	1,650.00
St. John	<u>450.00</u>
	\$ 21,750.00
Porter County 1972 paid 3-3-73	4,750.00
Town of New Chicago 1972 paid 6-13-73	150.00
Lake County 1972 paid 1-11-73	25,850.00
Schererville 1972 paid 1-2-73	1,650.00
Ogden Dunes 1972 paid 1-3-73	<u>17.00</u>
	\$ 32,417.00
TOTAL	<u>\$ 54,167.00</u>

commission members

Philip S. Jaynes, Jr., Chairman	Highland
Charles Froman, Vice Chairman	Ogden Dunes
Robert Frost, Secretary	Griffith
Dean Snider, Treasurer	Portage
William Tanke	Porter County
Russell Snyder	Munster
Norman Andress	Dyer
Thomas Crump	Gary
Mrs. Robert Ashcraft	Cedar Lake
Steve Manich	Lake County
Mrs. Clayton Root	Crown Point
Eugene Smith	St. John
Thomas Hart	Porter County
Charles Agnew	New Chicago
Albert Kinsey	East Gary
Walter Ford Jr.	Hammond
Herman Pflughoeft	Hobart
Wallace Michael	Schererville
Mrs. Robert Ensweiler	Lake County
Robert McClellan	Merrillville
William Tanke (Ex Officio)	Chairman, Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission
Gordon Lance (Ex Officio)	Indiana Department of Natural Resources

advisory committee

Ernest Davis	Black Oak
William Henderson	Merrillville
Mrs. Richard Comer	Gary
Mrs. James W. Duncan	Crown Point
George N. Hall, AIA	Griffith
Herbert Read	Chesterton

little calumet river basin commission
8149 kennedy avenue
highland, indiana 46322

annual report 1973